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Hi and welcome once again to the 41st issue of HTT. This time around I continue my Rod Bies bashing ways by reprinting some correspondence between Master Bies and former HTT editor Tim Ferrante. I'll restrain myself from making any comments as I think it pretty much speaks for itself. Thanks to Tim for sharing this momentous occasion. But first, in answer to numerous request (well, actually two people), here's a review by yours truly.

EL SECRETO DE MOMIA EGIPCIA (1974) OFF SPANISH LANGUAGE TV
DIRECTED BY ALEJANDRO MART REVIEWED BY CRAIG LEDBETTER

Spanish language TV stations are as good a source for obscure Euro-horror productions as your local video store. I've managed to see Riccardo Frezza's ISURNA WITH A TUMBLE UP FINE and Lucio Fulci's PLATRICE CENCI along with countless others. EL SECRETO DE MOMIA EGIPCIA (THE SECRET OF THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY) while obscure, (it's mentioned in Phil Hardy's error-prone encyclopedia



Of Horror Files, but only in passing and not actually reviewed) is certainly not in the same class as the two films previously mentioned. Filmed in France, this beautifully photographed picture hits a 10 on the ludicrous plot-o-meter.

Veteran heavy Frank Brana (LA MUENCA DE KING KONG, STREET WARRIORS I&II) plays the hero for a change as he visits his friend Sander Conde (played by another veteran of European productions, Jorge Ponsod). In an extended flashback sequence, Conde receives a sarcophagus that contains a perfectly preserved member of Egyptian royalty. He discovers that blood will bring the fellow back to life, so Conde and his brutish assistant John begin kidnapping local women for a constant supply of blood. As the mummy (I hesitate to use the word since he's not your typical withered, bandaged from head to toe fiend) drinks more and more of the red stuff he soon overpowers and imprisons Conde and easily dominates John, sending him out for even more noble blood banks. The arrival of Conde's daughter and her girlfriend distracts the mummy long enough for Conde to escape and dismember the guy's hand. After imprisoning the mummy in the basement, the story returns to the present where we see Conde whipping the severed hand that he has chained to a wall! As bizarre as this image is, I can't for the life or me figure out its significance in this film). That night Brana is lured to the basement by the now escaped hand (and the animation of those digits makes BRUI! CASE's SFX look like state of the art!) where he finds Conde dead, next to the expired body of the Egyptian mummy.

Crammed into a 90 minute slot. I'm sure certain scenes were cut out that might help to explain one hell of a lot. Even so we have such a delightful set piece as Conde's inept assistant getting his ass kicked by most of the women he tries to kidnap. Also, not only is the mummy a sex fiend! He always strips the women down to bra and panties before he bites their necks! but the son-of-a-bitch knows Juditeu!

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Dan Gomber, producer of the erudite fantasy THE SLASHER TIMES, apparently is making a movie called PAUL TURN-ON (see promo material below). I'm thoroughly convinced there is no hope for the horror video market. Even more reason to look overseas for thrills.

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"PAUL TURN-ON", a feature-length film written and produced by Dan Gomber, starring J. E. Hill, Denise Buge and Peter Elliott. Tom Shreckels, makeup coordinator for "Team of the Dead", only directed.



The movie follows the exploits of a very troubled young college student (named in chemical context). During the course of student experimentation, he discovers a potent mixture that turns people sexually misaligned, into frenzied animals. After experiencing a particularly brutal assault, this youth, venturing on the edge of reason, goes over the brink and discovers his deadly discovery.

Will the whole country fall into a violent sexual misceant?

We believe that this is horror entertainment that will satisfy the most discerning audience. For more information, contact

S. F. FILMS,
Attn: Dan Gomber
1120 Bedford Avenue
Apt. 47
Brooklyn, New York 11205
or call
(718) 549-1861

Now let's get to that Ferrante/Sims correspondence. Please note that Rod wrote a second letter not realizing he wrote the first. This should come as no surprise to loyal GOREFEST readers. Afterall, Rod reviewed the same movie under two different titles and gave each one a different rating, not realizing he was watching the same film (see GFW 457).

December 30, 1988

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THE GOREFEST

Horror/Gore Theatrical & Video NEWSLETTER

Vol. 10, No. 1
December 30, 1988

Three

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Next up is David Walker's review of one of Mario Bava's best films.

LISA AND THE DEVIL (1972) DIRECTED BY MARIO BAVA
REVIEWED BY DAVID WALKER

The original cut of LISA AND THE DEVIL still unofficially available on home video (though it has played TV in NYC, with obvious cuts for nudity and violence) and likely to remain so forever, is spellbinding cinema and highly deserving of better treatment than it has received. It is also a bit on the congested side, thanks to the merging of two distinct storylines/perspectives whose relationship is not altogether symbiotic (this is my theory). It's as though Bava had separate ideas for two different films and combined them--somewhat uneasily--for LISA. One of these "ideas" we'll call the Lisa Story. In it, Lisa (Lise Bonger) is a tourist in an Italian city who, after viewing a medieval fresco of the devil carrying off the dead, enters a tenuous, off-kilter mental territory where reality and fantasy merge. Her "guide" for this not-turning-back excursion into psychological hell is Leandro the butler/puppeteer (Telly Savalas), who bears a marked resemblance to Satan as rendered in the aforementioned fresco. This "storyline" holds sway over the movie's opening and closing sequences and would seem to be responsible for many of the subtle reality games and delicate contradictions with which the entire movie is rife.

The other plotline, which is somewhat more characteristic of Bava's work, we'll term the Maximilian Story. It's the account of a disturbed young man, Maximilian (Alessio Grandi), who lives in an old, half-furnished villa with his blind, aging mother (Alda Valli). There is a dusty, death-oppressed world; the mother is preparing a commemorative funeral service for her long-gone husband, and Max keeps the skeleton of his former fiancée in an upstairs bedroom. One night, against his mother's wishes, he takes in some stranded travelers, one of whom, Lisa, is the exact image of his late fiancée. He sees her as a chance to escape his dim, sepulchral existence and wooes her, somewhat successfully, until making the mistake of showing her the bedridden remains of her predecessor. Things begin to fall apart, and we eventually learn that a particularly devastating past event is responsible for the family's current sad state of affairs: Max's beloved fiancée had left him for his own stepfather, and was in the process of running away with the stepfather when Max killed her, thus avenging both himself and his mother. With its sharp delineation of the subjects of death, decay, romance and family torment, this second storyline is quintessential Bava psycho-othic. The familiar story elements are put together in such a way that each is keenly resonant and capable of drawing real thematic blood.

Unfortunately though, the Maximilian Story is intertwined with the Lisa Story, and this two-files-in-one quality prevents LISA AND THE DEVIL from achieving the thematic cogency of earlier Bava masterworks like WHAT? (1963), (THE HOUSE OF EXORCISM version,

with its added-in horror elements, is an impossible THREE film in one.) Everything that's really strong about LISA AND THE DEVIL--and there's a lot that is--belongs to the Maximilian story (although the Lisa story is not uninteresting and, in a different context, would probably make a decent movie). There are eloquent images (scores writhing in the kind of a wedding cake's haunting tangents during a dinner table conversation, the blind mother hears her dead husband walking in the room above her, and Sava's spirited camera takes a privileged moment to prowl the dark and eerie upper room, momentarily becoming both the mind's eye of the mother and the eyes of the ghost); and instances of desecrated humor (with the sincere intentions of a loving spouse, Max presents the undernourished bones of his decomposing fiancée with dessert, saying "I brought you some cake--it's your favorite, with chocolate sprinkles"). Especially provocative is an extended scene of attempted love-making on the necrophiliac bed, in which Max drugs Lisa and tries to make love to her unconscious body with the skeleton of his earlier love lying only an arm's length away. Haunted by Carlo Savina's beautiful music there, and directed as much for emotion and sympathy as for horror, this unsettling scene is simply one of the great, primal moments in horror cinema--and suggests possibilities for the movie as a whole that perhaps could've been realized if the Maximilian Story had been allowed to stand unencumbered, to its fullest advantage. Still, all criticisms notwithstanding, LISA AND THE DEVIL is the key work of Mario Sava's career, and its continual inaccessibility is a damn shame.

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SLAUGHTERHOUSE (1988) CHARTER ENTERTAINMENT
REVIEWED BY KRIS GILPIN

This new genre offering, written and directed by Rick Rosenthal, concerns old Lester Bacon (a ha! who, after 30 years, is about to lose his hog slaughterin' biznis to county foreclosure in his small town. Lester has a big fat retarded son named Buddy, though, who slices up people with a big butcher knife indiscriminately; Buddy also grunts and snorts like a pig instead of talking. The acting by everyone is better than average, and the camerawork is pretty slick for a lower budgeted movie. Later on two of the stereotypical teens in town bet their girls (one is a really cute brunette who gets hung up to dry) \$20 they can't stay inside the slaughterhouse during a thunder storm one night. There is a lot of dialogue between action scenes, a lot of the gore was cut quickly for an R rating (one throat-slitting is juxtaposed with a closeup of a tomato being sliced open) and there's no nudity on view (which of course, is usually essential in a good Shit Flick. Gory/funny-type music plays over the opening credits, as we see pigs being prepped for slaughter (yul-yul), and time is filled with montages of the teens farting around the slaughterhouse, a stupid dance scene at MAFI PA's annual pig out/food fight, and shots of Buddy riding around in the dead deputy's car (a stupid mistake: one girl "doesn't notice him" as Buddy zooms past her; soon afterwards she doesn't try to drive away from the creep when she could've given it a try). There is a neat severed-hand-with-blood-spitting-stump effect

fairly good, a 12 review of this film and a great head squish with flying brains, but the banter between soci dad and killer son, as well as the teen torture scene, are reminiscent of the 1970s CHAINSAW MASSACRE movies. The biggest "scare" comes when buddy slices someone's finger tip, then plays with the tiny wound--but how often are there gory real scares in blitters, anyway?--and there's just a little bit of "suspense" toward the end! the last shot of the film is old-hat, but cut a bit differently!. Due to its slow parts, "rental recommendation on SLAUGHTERHOUSE is barely marginal. Best fish" Buddy is a good boy, but he has what you might call basic hygiene problems."

THE OTHER HELL (1985) VESTRON VIDEO
DIRECTED BY STEFAN DOLWIDY (real name BRUNO MATTEI)
REVIEWED BY FREDMAN WILLIAMS

There is so much I must tell you, and so little time. I'd like to mention how this Russ in Paris movie starts with a nutoid nun slashing out the vagina of a dead nun, explaining (in atrocious dubbing) that the offending corpse gave birth to the son of the Devil, who still lurks in the catacombs, then goes over the edge after a waiter of cheap special effects and knives the little initiate she was scaring. I'd like to, but it doesn't have a whole lot to do with the film as a whole, so to hell with it.

After the fairly orthodox Padre Benedo investigates the weird happenings in the convent culminating in a death by stigmata, which is at least intellectually diverting!, he returns to Rome gibbering about the "nameless evil" that lurks in the catacombs. A big cardinal dispatches young Father Valerian to the convent. Valerian is a new breed of priest, who believes that evil is explainable in concrete psychological terms. Well, he ha on Valerian, as he starts coming up against stuff he can't explain away.

This is a jumbled film, all the more saddening because it is occasionally quite effective. There are some scenes of near hallucinogenic beauty and horror, and then boom, bac! we go to workman-like (and less than workman-like) filmmaking. Don't rent this film expecting fabulous make-up effects or a non-stop bloodbath. The film is very heavy on early (read:cheap) atmospheric. I spent most of the film cynically wondering where they'd fit in the zombies. I was not disappointed. Also interesting that Valerian should be named after an herbal sedative, as he had much the same effect on me.

I give THE OTHER HELL a borderline recommendation, mainly because it successfully managed to conceal from me the exact nature of the "nameless evil" hanging around in the catacombs. No small achievement, believe me.

Thank you Lucio Balbo for THE HORROR OF. UNCLUFF, Steve Bogdany for THE HILLS HAVE EYES, LARRY DILLI UP THE GRAVE, Mike Wittenberg for SILENT, Sinister Cinema is releasing UNCLUFF OF THE WARRIORS!

THE LONG HAIR OF DEATH (1964) GENSTER LINEA
DIRECTED BY ANTONIO MARGHERITA REVIEWED BY CONRAD WIDENER

To most fans familiar with his work, the name Antonio Margherita strikes fear into their hearts. Those who have seen his recent efforts (VOR and INVASION OF THE FLESH HUNTERS come to mind) seem to agree they are derivative junk. But throughout Margherita's long and wildly erratic career, he has also made some decent films. I would put THE LONG HAIR OF DEATH into that category.

At the end of the 15th century, Adela Harnstein, wife of the local count (Jean Ralferty), is burnt at the stake after being wrongly accused of murder by witchcraft. The woman's young daughter, Elizabeth, and Iurt (he's the real killer), the count's son, watch as Adela screams that a curse will fall over the village. Another woman, Helen (Barbara Steele), knows Adela is innocent, but her pleas to the count fall on deaf ears. The count later kills Helen to prevent her from telling the truth. Years pass and Adela's curse appears to be taking shape as a strange plague runs rampant through the town. Meanwhile Iurt has fallen in love with the now grown Elizabeth (Halina Zalewska). Although Elizabeth hates Iurt, the scoundrel forces her to marry him. The plague finally comes to an end and a ceremony is held to celebrate. During the ceremony a woman called Mary (she looks exactly like the murdered Helen) appears causing the count to die of a heart attack. Iurt soon has the hots for Mary and due to his loveless marriage, decides to poison his wife. Iurt's plan is a success, or is it? Iurt places the body of his dead(?) wife in her bedroom expecting to hear a scream from Elizabeth's servant. Instead he's shocked to hear the servant talking to Elizabeth! After the servant has left, Iurt, now a frazzled mess, rushes into the room to find nothing. Only his wife's empty breakfast tray remains. Other strange events occur that lead Iurt to believe his wife has returned from the dead. I don't want to give away the denouement, but it's both satisfying and chilling.

Along with CASTLE OF BLOOD (also starring Barbara Steele) and THE VIRGIN OF NUREMBERG (aka HORROR CASTLE), THE LONG HAIR OF DEATH is easily one of Antonio Margherita's best horror films. Here the direction is smooth and controlled, nicely enhanced by rotting corpses, striking lighting, rats, skeletons and cobwebbed crypts. The film has a fine cast too. George Ardisson, a familiar face to Italian film enthusiasts, is convincing as the conniving Iurt. As usual, Barbara Steele brings her own unique style to her role along with her strong screen presence and hypnotic beauty. I've never seen Halina Zalewska in any other films, but she is very good as the beautiful and determined Elizabeth. Lovers of Italian Gothic Horror films will eat LONG HAIR OF DEATH up.

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another one bites the dust. Steve Bogdanov submitted a long list of new titles for HIF when issue 66 rolls around. There are a few foreign titles PLACED OUTSIDE TO BEHOLD! His recommendations are: KING OF THE BARBARIAN FIGHTERS, and my favorite BRIDE OF THE DRAGON.